RESEARCH

MANITOBA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# BACKGROUND PAPER:

# FOREIGN STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MANITOBA

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M.P. Yakimishyn
Director of Research

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Note: Manpower, Employment and Immigration Commission was the data source for Figures 1 through 5.

## I. Introduction

In Manitoba, as in the rest of Canada, foreign students are defined as non-Canadians, with valid student status, enrolled in Canadian educational institutions. Every student requires valid authorization in the form of a student visa before he or she leaves the home country, or country of last permanent residence, to attend school in Canada. This is applicable whether students are attending elementary, secondary, or post-secondary schools.

This paper deals with foreign students in Manitoba's elementary and secondary schools. As a background paper, it attempts to answer some questions about Manitoba's foreign student population in relation to the foreign student population in the rest of Canada. How many students with valid student visas are enrolled in Manitoba and Canadian elementary and secondary schools? How do their numbers compare to total school enrollments? Has the number of foreign students changed within the last five years? More specifically with respect to Manitoba, from what regions of the world did foreign students in Manitoba originate?

## II. Limitations

There are several limitations to the data presented in this report. The number of valid student authorizations is highly variable. The number fluctuates not only by yearly quarters, which one would expect if foreign students returned to their home countries for summer vacation, but monthly as well. The data presented in this report are based upon the number of valid student visas on October 1st, 1980. It was felt this would be fairly representative for that school year.

The data also include foreign students enrolled in Canadian private schools. In Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg Collegiate is the only private institution reporting a significant foreign student enrollment. In other provinces, such as Ontario, commercially run private schools have much larger enrollments, several of which are double that of Manitoba's total foreign student enrollment.

## III. Foreign Students Across Canada

On October 1, 1980, the number of foreign students enrolled in Canadian elementary and secondary schools was 13,268 (Table 1). When the number of foreign students in each province is calculated as a percentage of total foreign student enrollment in Canada (Figure 1), over 60% of foreign students are enrolled in Ontario. In Manitoba, foreign student enrollment totalled 407, representing 3% of the Canadian total and ranking fifth overall.

In Figure 2, the total regular enrollment for each of the provinces as a percentage of total enrollments in Canada is illustrated. When the percentages in Figures 1 and 2 are compared, it is evident that Ontario has a larger than average number of foreign students. While Ontario has almost 38% of Canadian elementary and secondary enrollments, about 63% of all foreign students in Canada are enrolled in Ontario educational institutions. In comparison, Manitoba is slightly under-represented: over 4% of total Canadian enrollment occurs in Manitoba while about 3% of total foreign enrollment is found here.

From the comparison of foreign student enrollment to total elementary and secondary enrollment in each province (Table 2), it is evident that, as a percentage, the figures are small. Ontario ranks first with the largest percentage of foreign students: 0.45%. Manitoba ranks fourth with 0.20% of its total elementary and secondary enrollment comprised of foreign students.

Most (81%) of the foreign students in Canada are enrolled in secondary schools. Figure 3 illustrates the comparison of elementary and secondary foreign student enrollment in Canadian provinces and regions. Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan each have more than 80% of the total foreign student enrollment in secondary schools. The Atlantic region and Alberta both have a more equal split between elementary and secondary enrollment.

During the past five years, a 20% overall increase in the number of foreign students in Canada has occurred. The regional changes in foreign student enrollment between 1975 and 1980 are illustrated in Figure 4. The most dramatic change, a 51%

TABLE 1

ORDERING OF THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CANADIAN PROVINCES (OCTOBER 1, 1980)

| Province | No. of Foreign Students Enrolled in Elementary Schools | No. of Foreign Students Enrolled in Secondary Schools | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ontario | 994 | 7,305 | 8,299 |
| British Columbia | 397 | 1,405 | 1,802 |
| Quebec | 445 | 696 | 1,141 |
| Alberta | 435 | 586 | 1,021 |
| MANITOBA | 67 | 340 | 407 |
| Saskatchewan | 43 | 189 | 232 |
| New Brunswick | 82 | 85 | 167 |
| Nova Scotia | 31 | 83 | 114 |
| Newfoundland | 33 | 27 | 60 |
| Prince Edward Island | 1 | 14 | 15 |
| Yukon and Northwest Territories | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| TOTAL | 2,530 | 10,738 | 13,268 |

Source: Manpower, Employment and Immigration Commission.

TABLE 2

ORDERING OF THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT IN EACH PROVINCE, 1980

| Province | Number of Foreign Students Enrolled in Elementary and Secondary Schools October 1, 1981* | Total Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment, 1980** | Percentage of Foreign Students of the Total Elementary and Secondary School Enrollment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ontario | 8,299 | 1,826,100[e] | 0.45% |
| British Columbia | 1,802 | 504,350[e] | 0.36% |
| Alberta | 1,021 | 435,970[e] | 0.23% |
| MANITOBA | 407 | 204,395 | 0.20% |
| Saskatchewan | 232 | 204,974 | 0.11% |
| New Brunswick | 167 | 152,803 | 0.11% |
| Quebec | 1,141 | 1,121,200[e] | 0.10% |
| Prince Edward Island | 15 | 26,850 | 0.06% |
| Nova Scotia | 114 | 185,568 | 0.06% |
| Yukon and Northwest Territories | 10 | 17,750 | 0.06% |
| Newfoundland | 60 | 148,533 | 0.04% |
| TOTALS | 13,268 | 4,828,493 | |

*Source: Manpower, Employment and Immigration Commission.

**Source: Statistics Canada.

[e] = estimated.

The percentage of foreign student enrollment
in elentary and secondary schools in Canada
by each province or region

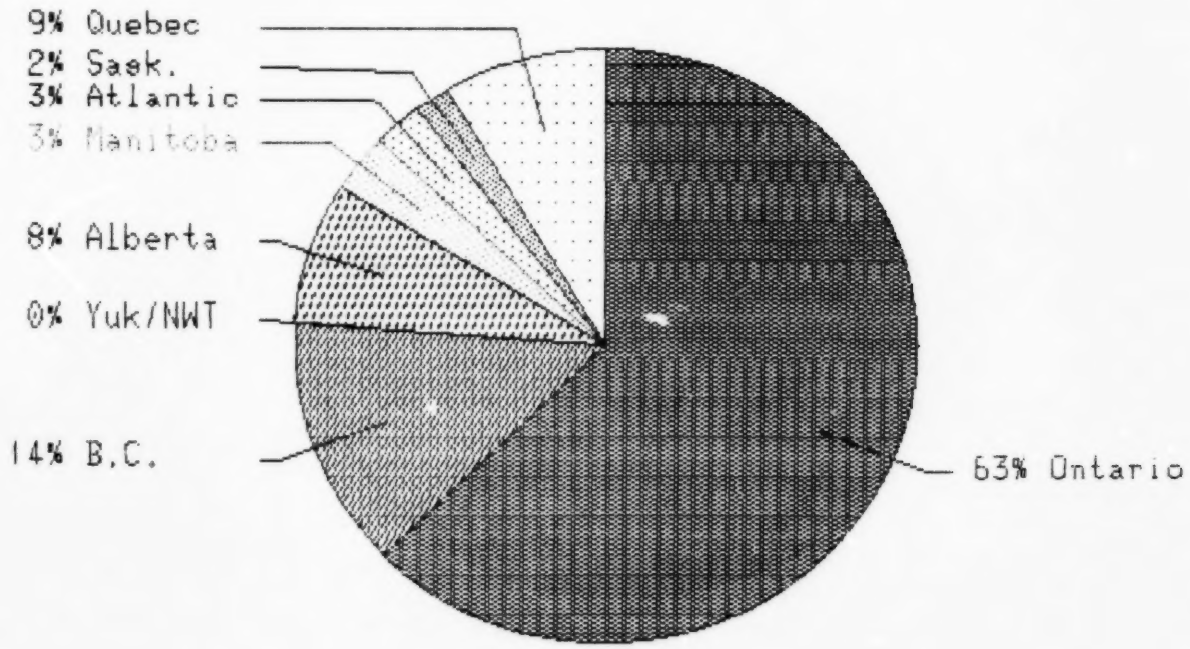


Figure 1.

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The percentage of total student enrollment
in elementary and secondary schools in Canada
by each province or region

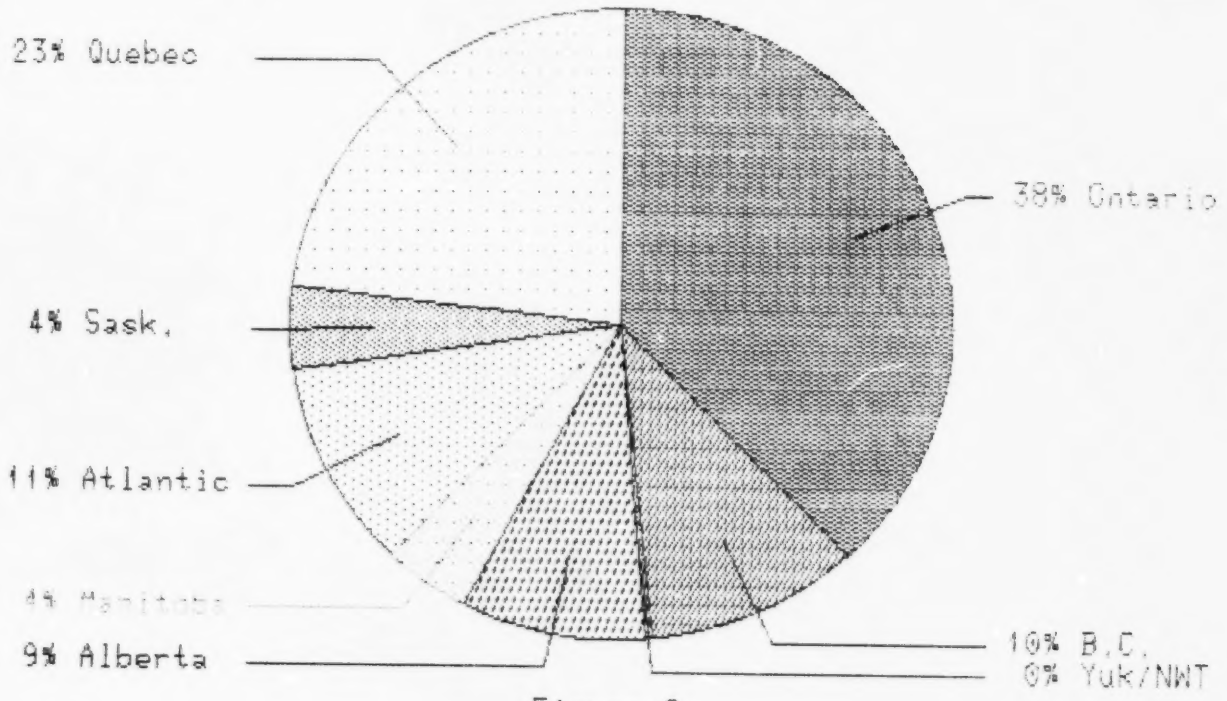


Figure 2.

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Comparison of percentages of foreign student enrollment in elementary and secondary schools in each province or region.

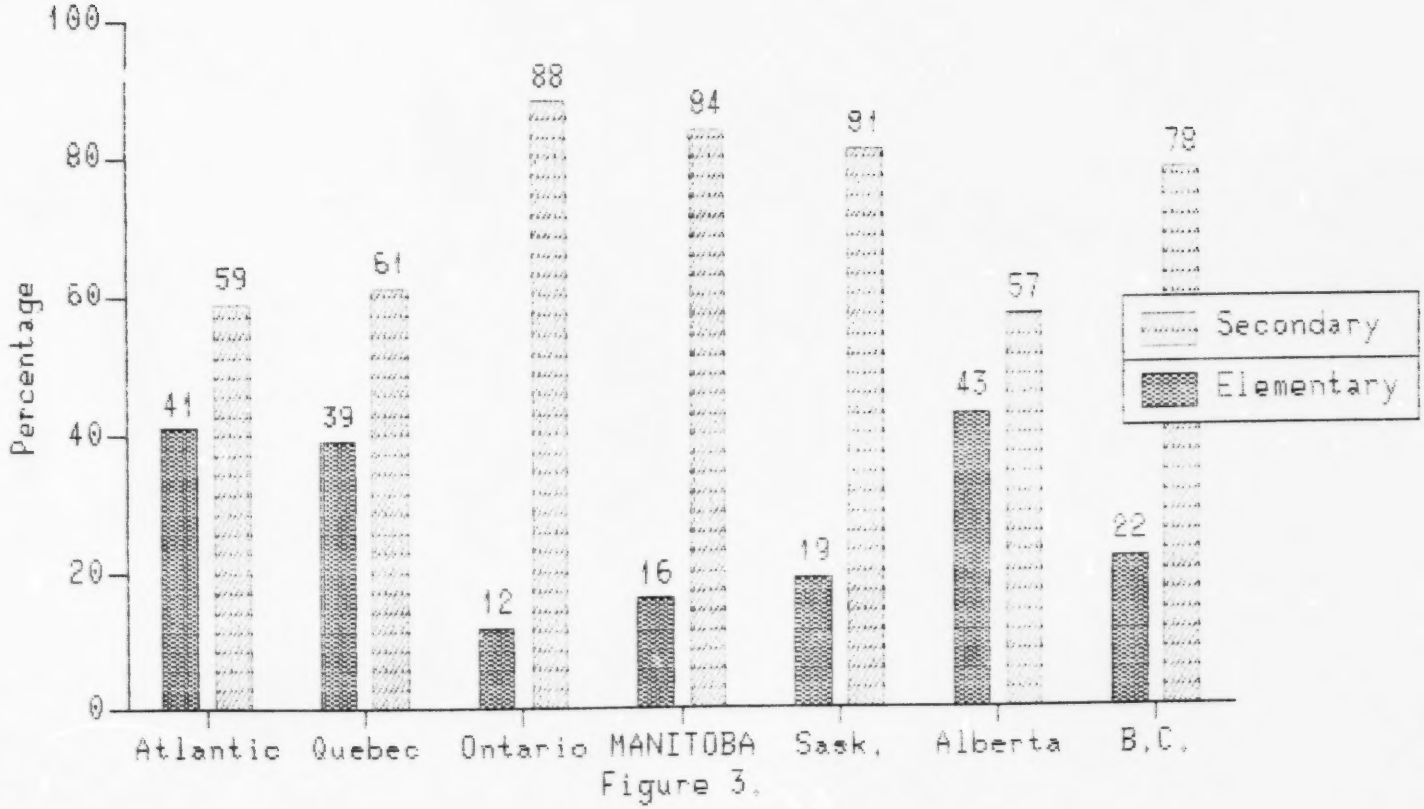


Figure 3.

Comparisons of foreign students (in hundreds) enrolled in elementary and secondary schools by region in 1975 and 1980.

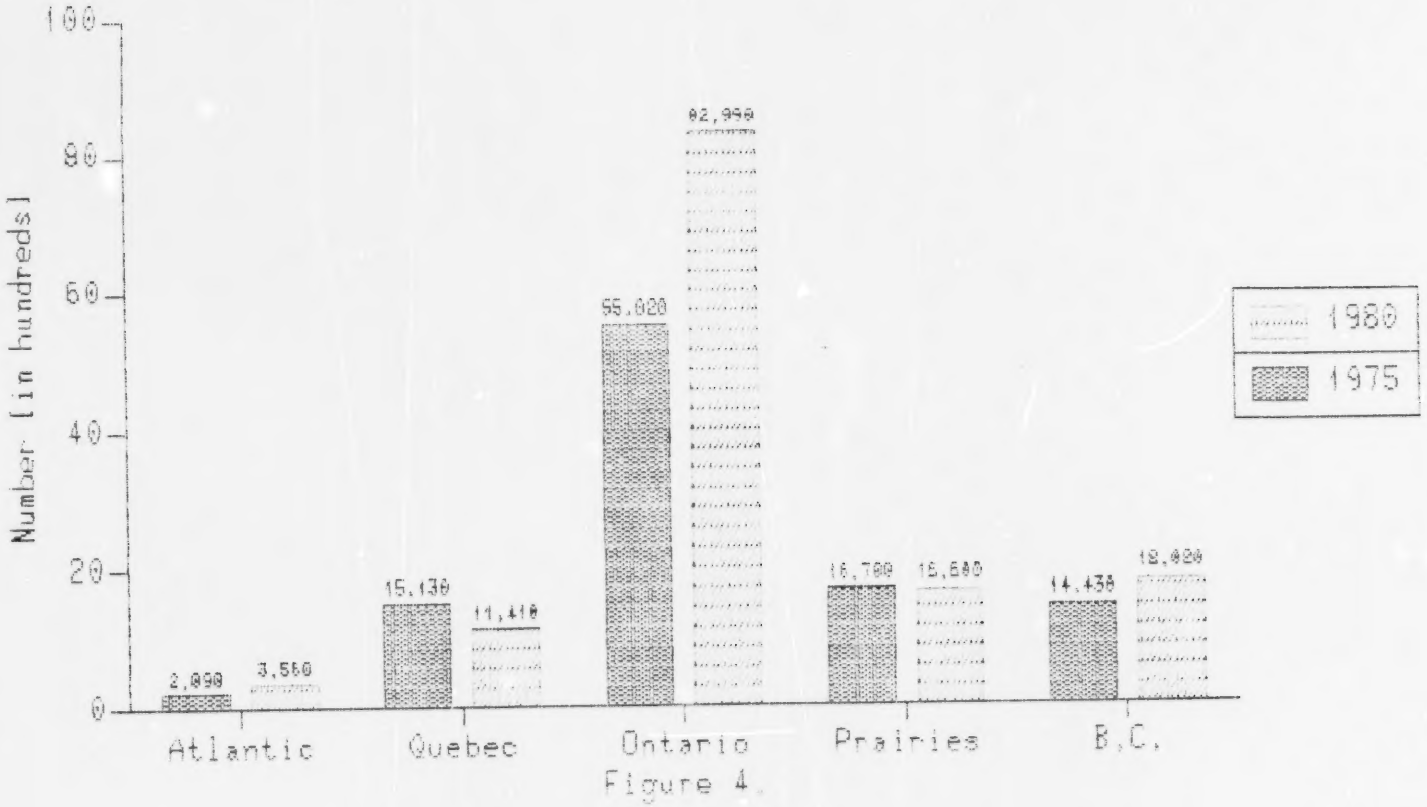


Figure 4.

increase, was in Ontario. Quebec was the only province or region with a large decrease in the number of foreign students. British Columbia and the Atlantic region both experienced increases in the number of foreign students, while the Prairie region remained about the same.

IV. The Origin of Foreign Students in Manitoba

The largest percentage of foreign students in Manitoba, in the fall of 1980, came from Asia (58.5%) (Figure 5). Roughly ten percent came from each of North and Central America (12.4%), Europe (9.8%) and the Carribean (9.3%). The remainder came from Africa (4.1%), South America (3.9%) and Australasia (1.8%).

V. Implications

A person with a student visa is residing in Canada on a temporary basis. Providing an education to these students is a philosophical choice for the local school division in Manitoba. The cost of providing education is a matter also determined by individual divisions.

English as a second language (ESL) is a common problem among many foreign students. The major problem areas appear to be in English and social science courses. Extra resources are available to deal with the students' inability to speak, learn and write English in some areas, but are not available in others. Past experience indicates that where ESL classes are available, there is no guarantee foreign students will attend. Similar attendance problems are encountered in upgrading (ie., non-credit) courses when offered.

According to a recent series of Globe and Mail articles on the subject of visa students and commercially run private schools (July 6, 9, and 11, 1981), many foreign students experience academic difficulties when they enter university. The reason many foreign students enroll in secondary schools is to prepare for entrance into Canadian universities. According to the Globe and Mail (July 6, 1981) limited university places in other countries and doubled tuition fees at British universities have made Canada the first choice for university-bound students around the world.

The percentage of foreign students in Manitoba public schools by region of origin.

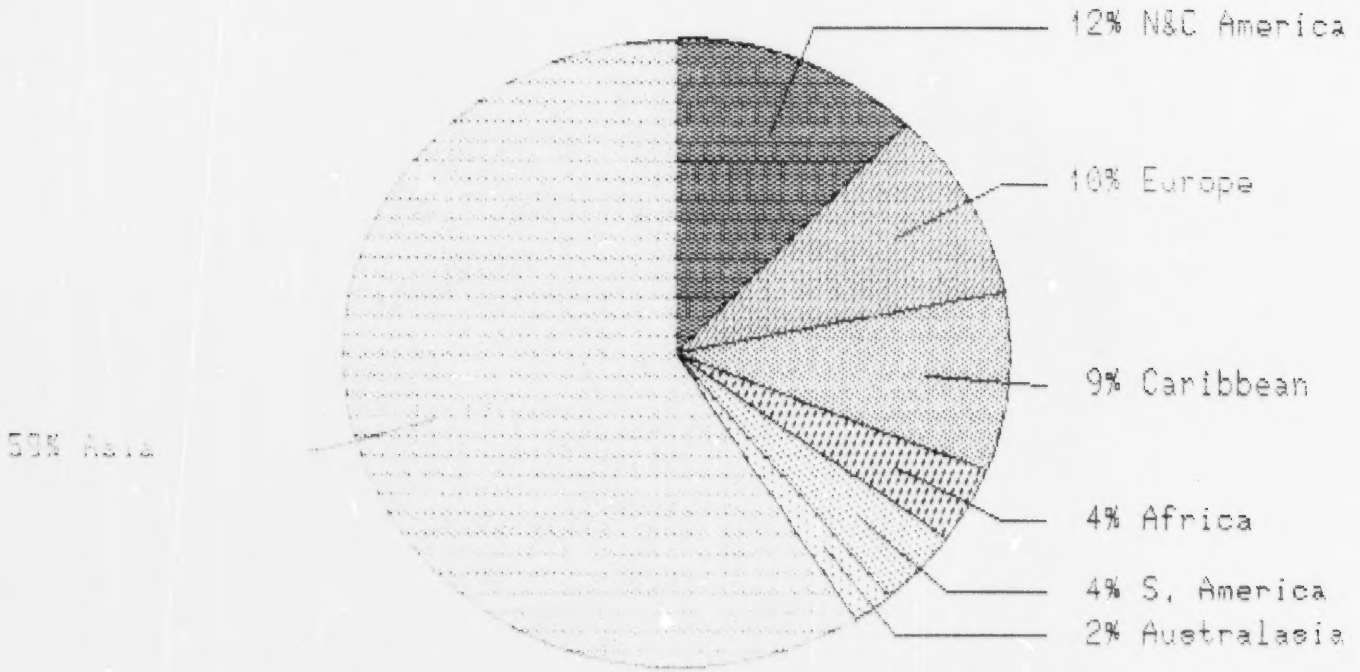


Figure 5.

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The number of foreign students in Manitoba elementary and secondary schools seems to have remained constant, with no major increases in their numbers. The implication is that an increase in special classes (ie. ESL) is not warranted. However, the number of foreign students into Canada has increased and it seems likely that this trend will continue. At present, Manitoba's universities do not assess a higher fee for foreign students, as do some other universities in Canada, and if the increase in university-bound students continues, the number of students in Manitoba may increase as well.

## VI. Conclusions

Foreign students, residing in Canada with student visas, make up a small percentage of total elementary and secondary school enrolments across the country. The largest number of foreign students are in Ontario. Manitoba ranked fifth with a total of 407 foreign students (October 1, 1980) of which almost 60% came from Asia. Overall, the number of foreign students has increased across the country in the past five years.

Considerations related to providing an education to foreign students center upon such issues as admission, funding and ESL. While federal officials grant student visas to applicants from foreign countries, in Manitoba, the decisions of whether to provide education, and at what price, are within the jurisdiction of local school divisions.